

Remarks

Applicants request consideration on the merits of the above-referenced patent application.

I. Amendments to the specification

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.78 and MPEP §202.01, Applicants have amended the first paragraph of the specification (*i.e.*, lines 4-7 on page 1) to identify the patent applications to which this patent application claims priority. Applicants request that replacement lines 4-7 on page 1 be entered into this patent application. The attached Appendix A on page 8 provides a marked-up version of lines 4-7 on page 1 showing the amendments. Applicants do not believe that this amendment introduces new matter.

II. Amendments to the claims

This Preliminary Amendment A cancels claims 18-21. Thus, claims 1-17, 22, and 23 are pending. Claims 5, 7, 9, 11, and 17 have been amended. All the claims, including the amendments, are shown in the previous section. Applicants submit that the amendments do not introduce new matter. Specifically:

Claims 5, 7, 9, and 11 have been amended to depend from claim 2 rather than from any one of claims 2, 3, or 4.

Claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 18-23. This amendment is supported by originally-filed claims 18-23.

Other amendments simply rephrase the claims, or correct grammatical or obvious errors. Applicants submit that such amendments are permissible under MPEP §2163.07.

Applicants reserve the right to claim any canceled and/or unclaimed subject matter in one or more later-filed continuation and/or divisional applications.

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Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants have enclosed a check to cover the fees for this application (*i.e.*, basic national fee; examination fee; search fee; extra claim fee; extra sheets fee; and late oath fee). Applicants do not believe that they owe any additional fee in connection with this filing. If, however, Applicants owe any fee(s) in connection with this filing, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge those

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Preliminary Amendment A
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fee(s) to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**. In addition, if there is ever any other fee deficiency or overpayment under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 and 1.17 in connection with this patent application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such deficiency or overpayment to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**.

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned if any questions arise that can be addressed over the phone to expedite examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Lydia N. Nenow, PTO Reg. No. 52,530
Harness, Dickey & Pierce, PLC
7700 Bonhomme, Suite 400
St. Louis, Missouri 63105
(314) 726-7500 (tel)
(314) 726-7501 (fax)

Appendix A
Marked-Up Version of Amendments to the Specification

The text on page 1 at lines 4-7 has been amended in the following manner:

PRIORITY CLAIM TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

The present ~~patent application~~ claims priority under Title 35, United States Code, §371 ~~as a United States national phase application based on International Patent Application No. PCT/US2003/025891 (filed August 19, 2003), which, in turn, claims priority under Title 35, United States Code, §119 to United States Provisional Patent Application application~~ Serial No. 60/404,484 ~~[[,]]~~ (filed August 19, 2002). ~~[[, which is]]~~ The above-referenced patent applications are incorporated by reference into this patent in ~~[[its]]~~ their entirety as if written herein.

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 CFR § 1.8

I certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service on **February 18, 2005** with sufficient postage as first class mail (including Express Mail per MPEP §512), and addressed to **Mail Stop PCT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450**.



Lydia N. Nenow, PTO Reg. No. 52,530

LNN/LVE